

CATHOLIC ART QUARTERLY



THE CATHOLIC ART ASSOCIATION

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The Catholic Art Quarterly

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Printed four times a year, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Michaelmas cycles,
at St. Cloud, Minn., with ecclesiastical approbation

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President's Page

WHAT determines good art? People generally answer with a shrug saying that it is a matter of taste. "Good taste" is accepted in our age as the sole criterion of art. It is understandable, and forgivable, that the general public should entertain such a notion, but that it should be accepted also by artists, craftsmen and writers on Christian art is deplorable.

This notion of the criterion of art is, of course, an aspect of the secular spirit of our age, the spirit of expediency, of relativity, of agnosticism. It is an application of the materialistic philosophy to aesthetics; of the same philosophy which has guided the social, political and economic forces of our times.

As in philosophy so in religion, in ethics and morality, in social relations, in international affairs, everywhere it is the same. There is no absolute truth, nothing is constant except constant change, nothing is stable or principled. All is relative, fluid, dependent on the prevailing modes of thought, on the appetite of the moment, on "taste".

So it is not surprising that our notions of art too are influenced by the prevailing winds of opinion. "What is truth?" asks Pilate, convinced beforehand of its non-existence. "What is right and wrong?" asks the modern cynic. "What is man, and why?" asks the bewildered tabloid reader. "What is art?" echoes the artist himself. The same answer is expected to all the questions. There is no absolute truth. Nothing is fixed in ethics and morality, nothing constant in conduct. There are no stable principles in art. If, in step with our age, we choose to believe that all is relative and shifting, and that nothing is absolute save the proverbial death and taxes, then we too, in common with non-Christian artists, must admit that art is subject to nothing more respectable than ephemeral whimsy, and that there are no universal principles underlying the affair of making and creating. And we must further concede that there are no acceptable norms for artistic conduct, that anything is valid so long as the means used are an accepted medium of expression. We would be forced to abandon all the rightful fundamentals of creative effort, and to grant that art as such is no longer a legitimate field of study with its recognized principles, disciplines and objectives.

We would further have to acknowledge that anyone and everyone may establish his own rules for artistic accomplishment, and that he may become his own arbiter, responsible to no other, up to the point where lawlessness is the only law, and there is only chaos and confusion.

But we Catholics cannot accept all this. Because art externalizes man's innermost existence, and because it can never be other than an honest and sincere expression of that inner calm or chaos, we cannot detach our concepts of art from our total outlook on life. If that outlook is weighted with considerations for the world and the flesh, how can our creative efforts be other than fleshly-worldly? If our point of view be that of the agnostic, how can our speech, thought, and manners be otherwise? It is not possible to gather good fruit and rich from the malformed and sickly tree.

As Catholics we have very definite ideas of what is meant by truth and falsehood, by good and evil, by beauty and ugliness. We know why we must reject ephemeral expedients and hold fast to universal anchors. We have these definitive concepts because we have a clear, if limited, idea of God, and of His relation to men.

The philosophy of agnosticism, the spirit of materialism, the total absence of the concept of Divinity in human affairs, which characterize our modern age are responsible for the chaos we witness in people's thinking and living. They are responsible for the degeneracy of much art, and of almost all of our so-called Christian art. Having rejected the universals implied by the existence of an Absolute, the criteria of shifting expediency take their place—the appetite of the moment, the fashion of the hour, the whim of the passing parade, "good taste."

But, as Gilson has said in discussing this matter, "good taste" is always "my taste." Each little "me" is a law unto himself. Each one for himself is not the Christian ideal of theory any more than it is the Christian ideal of practice. Strange as it may seem to some, the one, the only and certain way of becoming a Christian artist is to be a Christian, not in outward speech and manners only, but a Christian from within. We know that art is the externalization of the inner man, the manifestation of his deepest nature, the visible yearning of his soul for its heritage in Christ. For his art to be fully Christian, that inner man must be fully Christian. It is all so simple, and yet somehow it seems to have become so terribly complicated.



Art in Christian Philosophy

Walter Shewring

1. THE CHRISTIAN NORM

(A) THE TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF ART

THE doctrine of art here presented is that of Christian Scholasticism; above all, it is that of St. Thomas Aquinas. In so saying, I do not imply that it began with the Middle Ages, that it ended with them, or that it is only or chiefly applicable to them. On the contrary, its origins reach far back into Christian and pre-Christian history; it developed after St. Thomas and may and should develop still; its scope is universal. But here as in other things the Scholastic philosophy—and in a special manner that of St. Thomas—is a centre and focal point; it secured the wisdom of the past, it safeguards the wisdom of the future. When it accepted truths from earlier philosophies, it raised them and quickened them into a more organic life, so that it is no mere paradox to say that Aristotle owes as much to St. Thomas as St. Thomas to Aristotle. And in the same way, whatever accessions of truth have yet to enrich man's mind, they will bear their best fruit—they will be sure to escape sterility—only if they are grafted on that perennial doctrine.

It should be a matter of no surprise that the main elements of this theory of art are here and there to be found expressed in the writers of classical antiquity—in Plato and Aristotle and Plotinus, in Cicero and Seneca—or that long before the systems of the Schools took shape, the Greek and Latin Fathers had drawn upon these classical sources. Moreover, we now know of close correspondence of theory in the thought of the East. All this is as it should be. One of the marks of Thomism is its confirmation (in its own higher mode) of principles accepted by the common intelligence of mankind. Thomism does not deny traditional experience; it sifts the explanations of experience, accepting them or rejecting them with equal authority by its certain standard of truth (for truth measures truth and error both) and integrating into its own synthesis all that it accepts.

But since to all outward seeming the main Thomistic positions in this matter are those of natural reason, what claim has such a philosophy to the title of Christian? In the first place it may be said that all truth, whether natural or revealed, has its source in one God who has finally revealed himself in Christianity; it was to all truth that Christ came to bear witness, and therefore, as St. Justin said in the second century, "All the good doctrine of all men belongs to us Christians."¹ But we may go further than this. There are truths which are in themselves accessible to natural reason

1. *Apol.* II, 13.



but which in fact, without Christianity, natural reason did not attain. Aristotle, for instance, in considering the nature, the activities and the end of man, did not reach as far as unaided reason might conceivably have done. Yet for him, no less than for the Scholastics, art is something which widely permeates human life; so that there are consequences of his theory which are better seen in the light of a Christian philosophy—and this because, even on the natural plane, Christian philosophy has a clearer and more consistent view of man.

But again there is something more. Though reason is formally distinct from faith, and philosophy from theology, yet the Christian does not exercise his reason in complete isolation from faith, and Christian philosophy cannot refuse or forget the illumination of theology. Hence, throughout all metaphysics, the possibility of transfiguration. There is such a transfiguration in this doctrine of art. The exemplar of human

art is God the Son, who is the eternal Art of the Father.

(B) THE NATURE OF ART

Human activities are divided in the first place into the speculative and the practical. Practical activities are divided again according to their objects. On the one hand there are the activities of *doing*; this is the sphere of morals and prudence. On the other hand there are the activities of *making*; this is the sphere of art. As prudence governs things to be done, *agibilia*, so art governs things to be made, *factibilia*.

The fullest definition of art given by St. Thomas is borrowed from the *Ethics*: *Ars est quidam habitus factivus cum vera ratione*.^{*} Two shorter formulas stress one or another part of this definition: *Ars est habitus intellectivae partis*,¹ and *Ars est racta ratio factivilium*.² Let us be quite sure what these assertions mean.

First, art is essentially something within man himself, not something outside him. And it belongs formally to his *intellect*, not to his emotions.

Next, art is an intellectual disposition or habit. 'Habit' in the Scholastic sense is something quite different from the 'habit' of common speech, which belongs to the actions of routine or the functions of the nerves. Here, on

*. In *Eth.* VI 1. 3. Sir William Ross usefully gives alternative renderings of Aristotle's original Greek.

(a) 'Art is a state concerned with making, involving a true course of reasoning.' (Oxford Translation of the *Ethics*.)

(b) 'Art is the disposition by which we make things by the aid of a true rule.' (Aristotle.)

1. *De ver.* X, 9, ad. 6.

2. *C. G.* 1, 93.

the contrary, habit is something stable within the mind (technically, something midway between potency and act³) enabling a man to work with full awareness. This habit remains with the artist whether he is working or not. Thus St. Augustine asks⁴: "Who would dare assert that art is not in the artist even when he is not exercising it?"

Next, art is concerned with *making*—the making of things in general, not merely of this or that class of things. Since this quite simple notion, though familiar to the civilizations of the past, is particularly unfamiliar to our own, it must be grasped firmly before we can proceed. Let me put it in this way. Illustrations drawn from art have always been common in philosophic discussion, and the modern fashionable philosopher will speak often of the art of the painter, the poet, the novelist or the composer. Plato and St. Thomas use illustrations from art as freely as anyone; but Plato turns most readily to the art of the shoemaker or weaver, St. Thomas to that of the carpenter, housebuilder or smith. In such a view it is not of course denied that some things made are more important than others—that a *Maesta* of Duccio, for instance, is a nobler and higher thing than a wooden chest which is good of its kind; but it is asserted strongly that the chest and the painting are equally works of art.

Finally, art implies—in a sense, art *is*—an *upright principle*, a *true rule*, an *undeviating norm*, by which the artist directs his making. The alternative phrases should convey a fair notion of the Latin *vera ratio* or *recta ratio*, for which there is no direct English equivalent; it should be plain at least that whereas the artist is popularly imagined as inspired by some kind of whim or caprice, the Scholastics think of him as working by a firm standard of intellectual rightness. And "art has determined means of attaining its end."⁵

Art then is primarily an intellectual thing. It also involves the will, for the work of art would never be made without the will to make it; the artist is a voluntary agent, and his work is an efficient cause. But the formal cause is the concept or idea in the artist's intellect, his 'intelligible word', the 'form of his art'. The concept is the end and fruit of an intellectual process which began with images of the sense, and by a common metaphor the preceding discursive thought is said to 'generate' this "inward work which belongs to no nation's speech."⁶ Itself immaterial, the idea in the artist's mind is destined to be imitated materially—in wood, stone, paint, words, musical sounds—and the truth of the work of art is determined by its likeness to this original, the intellectual 'form' which the visible form embodies in a lower mode of being. "When an artist makes a painting or a casket, he must needs have within himself a figure or a cas-



3. C. G. 1, 92.

4. *De imm. animae* paga. 5.

5. S. T. II-II, 47, 4, ad 2.

6. S. T. I, 93, 7, ad 3.

ket which is nobler than the outward one and gives him more delight. And when he has made his painting, he pays heed to it no longer, but delights in that which he has within him in virtue of his primal knowledge."⁷

The whole question of the artist's idea and its relation to his working would admit of more development than is possible here, but certain misunderstandings may fairly easily be dispelled. St. Thomas treats of the matter as a metaphysician, concerned with the modes of being and of causality not as a scientist or psychologist in the modern sense. It is clear that different works of art will call for greater or less preliminary thought and for ideas more or less elaborate, according as the projected work is a pair of shoes or the Great Wall of China, and epigram of two lines or a drama of five acts. Allowance is made for this. "The artist conceives an idea of the painting of a house which is distinct from the idea of the house itself;" and one 'word' may generate another.⁸ Again, an artist may set to work before his idea is complete and exploit the possibilities of 'trial and error' allowed by some materials. The use of such a method (though often unnecessary and undesirable) in no way disproves the Scholastic principle, which asserts only the precedence (temporal, logical and metaphysical) of the immaterial thing over the material thing; in any case the idea must be complete before the material work is complete. But for its perfect illustration the Scholastic theory looks rather to such examples as that of Mozart, who is said to have conceived a whole symphonic movement as one point, or of the Eastern painter who "always seems to see his design upon the surface, and merely to outline what is to him already there."⁹

To turn back a moment before we go further—in the Scholastic theory, art embraces all making, and it belongs essentially to the mind. The word 'art' is used strictly of *that by which* the artist works—whether his permanent intellectual habit, the principal of his making, or his inward word intelligibly conceived. Less strictly, it is sometimes used of the whole process of making; and a Scholastic writer today will not altogether avoid the convenient modern usage where the collective works of art of a given period are called its art. But whenever the word is used formally, it denotes something inward and intellectual.



Man as artist imitates God as Artist. In what sense does the analogy hold? Christian tradition of course makes an absolute distinction between human making and true creation. "Human art", says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "transmutes existing things into something different; the creative power calls into being things which did not exist."¹⁰ Nevertheless, as St. Thomas says, the Catholic faith calls Almighty God not only *Creator* but also *Maker*, for making properly belongs to an artist

7. Fra Giordano of Pisa, preaching in Florence at Santa Maria Novella, 20 March, 1305.

8. *De ver.* III, 7, c.; *C. G.* IV, 14.

9. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (1908) p. 67.

10. *Thesaurus* XV.

who works through his will. And because every voluntary agent works through a concept of his intellect which is called his *word*, and the Word of God is his Son, the Catholic faith confesses of the Son that through him *all things were made.*"¹¹ Differing infinitely from human modes by a generation without becoming and a consubstantiality of nature and essence with the conceiving intellect, God the Son is nevertheless the true archetype of the word in the human artist's mind; he is that by which the Father makes, the perfect Word, *Ars quaedam omnipotentis atque sapientis Dei*, filled with the living unchanging principles from whence proceed all created things.¹²

(C) THE PURPOSE OF ART

In the Scholastic view, art is concerned with making generally; so that to ask what is the purpose of art is to ask why things in general get made by men. This is not a question which the Scholastics were accustomed to ask; however, if we want an answer, St. Thomas will provide one, though he gives it not as the solution of a problem but as the statement of a truism. Things are made to be used by man; and the 'end' of works of art is either their use (*finis quo*) or men themselves (*finis cuius*).¹³ The end of 'art' in its stricter sense—the intellectual principle of making—coincides with the end of the artist as artist; it is the work of art itself. The end of the artist as man belongs proximately to the order of prudence (it may be for instance his livelihood or the service of his neighbors), while ultimately of course it is the knowledge and love of God.



More characteristically, the Scholastics consider art as ordered to a particular end—a given art (that of building, say) being distinguished from other arts by having its own end, namely the production of houses; and again, a given builder is thought of as building a particular house, which is 'the end of his art' on that occasion. More detailed analysis of the ends of the arts involves in the first place a classification of the arts themselves; and various classifications have at various times been offered—for instance by St. Basil, St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure. These will not be discussed here. The modern reader will better be served by some elaboration of the principle that though the activity of art proper ends with the work of art, the work itself is destined for use. This was a commonplace to St. Thomas; it is perhaps not so to ourselves.

We may first consider two senses of the word 'useful'. In a narrow sense we may call things useful which are undesirable in themselves and are desired only as a means to something else—for instance, the taking of a bitter

11. *Compendium* 96.

12. St. Augustine *De Trin.* VI, 10; cf. St. Thomas *De ver.* II, 14, c.

13. C. G. III, 36; In *Phys.* II, 4.



medicine.¹⁴ In a wide sense we may call things useful which in any way serve the ends of man. Thus St. Thomas says that of all human pursuits the pursuit of wisdom is most *useful*, because through wisdom we reach the kingdom of immortality. The whole matter of usefulness is in fact to be understood through the traditional hierarchy of means and ends. Here, at one extreme, are things which cannot possibly be considered except as means; at the other is the only thing which is an absolute end, the Beatific Vision. In between come the innumerable things which are the end of one operation and the beginning of another—relative ends. The taking of an unpleasant medicine is in no sense an end in itself—it is solely a means to health; but we have only to pass to ordinary eating and drinking to find something which is more than this. Here also we have a means to health; but if the food and drink are good, the activity is also a thing in its own right, sought in a sense for its own sake. On an immeasurably higher plane, we have the speculative activity of metaphysics, something so autonomous that in the natural order it may be considered to have no end outside itself. Nevertheless the end of man transcends the natural order; “the last end of an intellectual creature is the seeing of God in essence”; hence, ultimately, even the activity of metaphysics is a relative not an absolute end, and may be called, as St. Thomas calls it, *useful*.¹⁵

If therefore we say that works of art are useful, we do not imply that they are nothing but means, but that they are ends in one sense and means in another. When the form in the artist's mind has been imposed on its proper material, his activity as artist is over. The finished work—a cloak, a bookcase, a poem—is ‘the end of his art’, and both he and others may consider it in itself as something well and truly made, a thing on its own account. But the artist is also a man; it was as a man that he chose to make the particular work, and in the very nature of things his choice must have had some purpose, which was the final cause of the work. It is irrational to make things which have no use, and if the purpose is unfulfilled, the artist as man worked in vain.

To this it may be replied: “It is obvious that cloaks and bookcases are meant for use, but surely a poem is different—is it not meant for pleasure?” But if one admits that a poem is meant for anything, one admits that it has a use; one says in fact that the use here is not something physical but is intellectual pleasure. And the Thomist agrees—it is part of his argument—that some things have a physical and others a mental use (though the distinction is less rigid than might be supposed.) However, he will not allow that pleasure of any kind is a sufficient end—rather, he would say, it supervenes upon some activity, which it perfects and enriches. In the case

14. S. T. I, 5, 6, ad 2.

15. C. G. I, 2.

of the poem, the activity is the assimilation of some intellectual content proper to the medium of verse. This may be and should be pleasurable; but to subordinate the activity to the pleasure is quite literally preposterous.¹⁶ Yet attempts are still made—they are even made by Catholics—to lift art into some region where means and purposes are transcended, “the Scholastic theory” one sometimes has heard it said “is really concerned with the crafts; what *we* call art is something different—sculpture, painting, music. Art in this sense is contemplative, and contemplation is admittedly a pure end in itself.” All such assertions rest on a confusion of terms. Without making the possible distinctions on the nature of contemplation, we may briefly reply thus. “What do you mean by art? The art in the painter’s or sculptor’s mind—the forming of a concept which he can contemplate if he will without embodying it in a material at all. Art in this sense does not reach the spectator. You do not mean this. Do you then mean the work of art, the painting or sculpture as a material thing? If its mere coming into existence is self-sufficient, if there is nothing to be *done* with it, you would have no complaint were it destroyed as soon as made; and where does contemplation come in? You do not mean this. Do you mean your own contemplation of the painting or sculpture? If so, may you contemplate prosperously—but your contemplation is certainly not art.”

(D) MAN AS ARTIST AND THE ARTIST AS MAN

When we say that art is concerned with making generally, we imply that it reaches widely into human affairs. Its scope is in fact wider than the word ‘making’ at first suggests. It is clear that in the Scholastic view there are not only arts of painting and carving and architecture but arts of weaving and carpentry, iron-working, penmanship, and so forth. In all these cases there is something tangible made. But the Scholastic speaks also of an art of fiddling—as we might ourselves—and again of arts of government, medicine and seamanship, each with its ‘artists’; this is outside our present custom, though DeFoe writes of a mate who was ‘an excellent sea-artist’. Here it is less easy to see what is ‘made’, and we may be tempted to think that ‘art’ in these cases is metaphorical. It is not really so; it is analogical, for we can go behind the explicit formula *recta ratio factibilium* and produce either a metaphysical or a popular definition which does justice equally to the arts of painting, fiddling and governing. Defining metaphysically, we may say: “Art is a virtue of the practical intellect, using determined means to impose order on things.” Defining more properly, we may say:



16. Compare G. G. III, 2 with *Compendium* 143 and 104 and C. G. I, 2.

"Art is a virtue of the practical intellect, using determined means to impose order on things. "Defining more popularly, we may say: "Art is human working—mental or physical—as directed by the mind rather than by the will."

How much is here implied is a thing not easily to be grasped in these times; for this theory of art envisages a society where work in general is rational and where workers in general are intellectually responsible—a society where "the artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist."¹⁷ This is very remote from ourselves, but unless we understand what is meant by such a society, we can give no more than a notional assent to the Scholastic doctrine of art.¹⁸

Each man has his own status as artist, but every artist has the status of man; art governs his work intellectually, but prudence should govern his actions morally. The general relations of art and prudence are outside my present purpose (they have been admirably discussed by Eric Gill and by Maritain); here I shall touch merely one point—the social duty of the artist as man. Man is a social animal; and therefore, St. Thomas says profoundly, he needs to be helped by others if he is to attain *his own* goal.¹⁹ Hence the reciprocal usefulness of the arts. As the artist owes it to his intelligence that his work shall be reasonable, so he owes it to his good will that his work shall not only be useful to someone but, as far as may be, useful communally.

(E) A DIGRESSION ON BEAUTY

Why is it that all this while I have had nothing to say on beauty? Merely because beauty for the Scholastics is not a special prerogative of works of art. Prevailing opinions to the contrary invite this digression.

Like being and truth and goodness, beauty is essentially a transcendental. Hence it cannot formally be defined, and we are not likely to get a closer description of it than St. Albert's 'radiance of form' (*resplendentia formae, splendor ipsius formae*).²⁰ Passing at once from essential beauty to beauty as participated—as a quality of things—we may resume St. Thomas' *obiter dicta* on the subject by saying that a thing's beauty is its perfection in its own kind, and this not as something known or desired, but as something apprehended. It therefore belongs not to works of art only but to visible nature and to the lives and actions of men.



It is from nature that Christian thought has most often drawn its examples of beauty—above all from the ordered universe as a whole; the tradition is well established in St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Basil and St. Ambrose. St. Augustine constantly returns both to the general beauty and to the particular beauties of nature. Profoundly aware that things

17. C. G. III, 83.

18. A. K. Coomaraswamy.

19. Some idea of an unextinguished normal society may be gained from such works as Coomaraswamy's *Indian Craftsman* and Pallis' *Peaks and Lamas* and—in a much more restricted fashion—from Bourne's *Wheelwright's Shop* and from Benfield's *Purbeck Shop*.

20. C. G. III, 117.

are beautiful in their own kind and not in another kind, that a thing's perfection is independent of private likes and dislikes, and that relations of part to whole in nature may be less intelligible to us than they are in themselves, he praises not only the beauty of stars, sky and ocean but the beauty of thistles, frogs, fleas, monkeys and worms.²¹ St. Thomas is in the same tradition. "To belittle the perfection of creatures is to belittle the perfection of the divine power," and there are many things we do not need for our own house which help to complete the wholeness of the universe."²²

As for a good life and good actions, we need scarcely recall that Christian thought is at one with classical in attributing beauty to them—this is quite properly and without metaphor. It is clear that we can regard an action—of the Good Samaritan, of St. Martin of Tours—as something beautiful in itself, apart from the works in which it has been recounted (the 'prose form' of the Gospel or of Sulpicius Severus.) And "if we care for fine versas, how much more for a noble life?"²³

Works of art, like anything else, are beautiful through perfection in their own kind; they must be something before we call them beautiful, and if some things are beautiful in a higher mode than others, it is because they exist in a higher mode. A Madonna of Sano di Pietro has indeed a nobler and deeper beauty than a well-made cup or dish; but this does not mean that painted pictures as such have a special right to beauty. "An iron stylus" says St. Augustine "is at once beautiful in its own kind and adapted for our using it";²⁴ and it is a deep mark of modern degradation that we should be content to use ordinary things which are not beautiful and be eager to look for beauty in specialized works of "fine art." If a painter can conceive Madonnahood itself as imitable in paint, he has found an intellectual region closed to potter and smith; if he uses the ostensible theme of a Madonna for a mere composition in lines and colors (best observed as sensitive connoisseurs inform us, upside down), his activity is no more elevated—it is only less honest—than theirs. There are in fact many thousands of easel paintings which have less to communicate to the intellect than a classical Korean vase.

One thing more. There are those who write as though beauty differed from other transcendentials in communicating itself whole in every manifestation. "In great art alone is it given us to touch the Absolute." Need one say that such words are meaningless? Being, truth, goodness, beauty—each of them in itself is an absolute, each is known to us only as participated. The beauty of any work of art is no nearer to being beauty itself than the



21. See for instance *De ord.* I, 2, 25-6 and II, 51; *De nat. boni*, 13-18; *De Gen. contra Man.* I, 25-6.

22. *C. G.* III, 69; *S. T.* I, 72, 1, ad 4.

23. Gerard Manley Hopkins.

24. *De ver. rel.* paga. 39.



goodness of any action to being goodness itself, and neither ultimately can satisfy us. In the words of Lucian which so haunted Marius the Epicurean, "We desire not something beautiful, but the most beautiful of all. Unless we find that, we shall think that we have failed."

II. MODERN ABERRATIONS

Roughly speaking (and the scope of this essay forbids many possible reservations) the art to which the Scholastic doctrine looked was the art which Christians in general practised from their emergence from the Catacombs till the close of the Middle Ages. But from then onwards it becomes increasingly hard to reconcile such a doctrine with the kind of work actually pro-

duced; today it seems almost impossible. If then one holds this doctrine to be of general validity, it remains to show that the last four or five centuries have in fact deviated from the norm—that the fault is with modern practice, not with traditional theory. For the sake of force as well as of brevity, I shall make my treatment summary.

The decay of the mediaeval order bred the Renaissance; physics encroached on metaphysics; merchants became rulers; politics, which had always come short of Christian morality, claimed independence from that morality; uncritical admiration of Greece and Rome rekindled errors which Plato and Aristotle had combated. In the Catholic Church itself, dogma as such, was protected but there was *Laissezfaire* in everything else, and it was forgotten that false philosophy overflows into false theology.²⁵

One result of all this was the enslavement of certain arts to the purposes of flattery and illusion. Of flattery—because painting, sculpture, architecture and poetry, which before had served the community at large in a manner acceptable to all, were now characteristically diverted to the glory of private persons; from churches and their appropriate paintings and sculptures—"the bibles of the poor"—the most gifted artists turned to the castles and palaces of the rich, which they adorned with portraits and with such vapid mythology as best gratified the taste of their patrons. Of Illusion—because the growing enthusiasm for physical science encouraged men to observe and reproduce the accidents and appearances of things rather than assimilate their essence and represent that. The vogue of Graeco-Roman vulgarities fostered this anti-intellectual attitude, which prophetically exemplified our modern use of unbelievable ingenuity in doing something

25. C. G. II, 3.

not worth doing at all. Paintings of religious subjects continued to multiply, but they were no longer religious pictures. A characteristic Renaissance crucifixion presents a tortured man as he might have appeared to the unbelieving Jews; theologically, this approaches the heretical; and the man himself is not universal but individual—a particular model exhibiting the painter's skill in anatomy and relief; intellectually, this approaches the contemptible.

Meanwhile the other arts continued much as before. Though the status of common artists sank as that of painters and sculptors rose, the ordinary workman was still intellectually responsible. Though the rich encroached upon the rights of the poor, the poor remained persons, often with some small property, almost always with tools of their own;²⁶ while the individual both used and understood the communal arts to which he also contributed. These conditions were shattered by the Industrial Revolution.

When machines took over the work of men, the first and most obvious loss was in the quality of the things made. Tools had assisted men to shape their work under the control of the mind; machines did something completely different—they themselves determined the nature of the thing made, and it was for the worker to assist the machine. And since machines were used not to make things better but to make them more cheaply, the characteristic products of the new age were neither reasonable nor durable.

But men suffered worse than things. Though the machine-designer had still the chance (rarely taken) of using intelligence in his work, the machine-minder—the common worker of the new order—had no such chance at all. He kept some moral responsibility; intellectually he was irresponsible; he had ceased to be an artist.

The social order was breaking meanwhile. There was the great flight from the land which the present Pope has numbered among the major evils of modern times. Men left an organic village community with its traditions of responsible work and attached themselves to a disordered urban system where the very notion of responsible work quickly became forgotten. A pretence of political freedom hid social slavery, loss of property, mental degradation. Workers themselves came to accept the standards of their employers—to respect monetary gain instead of themselves and their work. The human person had been betrayed.

But the men of business who now controlled affairs could not rest content with their own subhuman world. As they desired religion on Sundays as a foil to their money—changing of the week, so they desired specially sensitive human works as a foil to the workaday industry from which all sensibility and humanity had vanished. It should surprise no one that the oppressors of the poor preferred emotional and romantic art, or that having destroyed the personality of the common man, they set particular store on artistic individuality.²⁷ Hence the modern



26. To most readers this will mean nothing. For concrete explanation see Rose, *The Village Carpenter* (1938), pp. 36 and 50-51.

27. Personality—that which makes a man truly himself in relative self sufficiency; individuality—that which marks a man off from others.

apotheosis of the 'fine arts.'

'In this age of mechanization the human person is often no more than a highly developed tool; a tool for labor—it may be, alas, a tool for war'²⁸ That is the nature of our civilization; and a few works of genius will not redeem it.

III. A RETURN TO THE NORM.

Art cannot be isolated from the community, and if we wish to return to normal art we must first return to a normal society. The man must precede the artist, and we must recover the human person before we recover human making.

Hence our immediate concern as Catholics is not with the problems of modern painters and novelists, interesting and exalted though these may be. Rather it is with a fully Christian life, and through it with the restoration of those conditions in which the common arts can flourish—conditions towards which we are directed in the encyclicals of the modern Popes. To change a state of things where immense power and tyrannous economic supremacy are centered in the hands of a few²⁹, to induce 'as many as possible of the people to prefer the status of owner'³⁰, to regain for everyone 'the right of a reasonable liberty in the choice of a walk in life and the following of a true vocation'³¹—these things are our first and essential task.

If the restoration now of a complete Christian society seems all but impossible, we are not therefore released from effort. What nations refuse to do, individuals may accept. We may form—we may at least help others who form—a small Catholic community where the Christian life is sought whole; we may resolve to earn our own livelihood usefully and responsibly; we may assure ourselves that the things we use are well made, and that we pay a just price for them. Action such as this, whether it is imitated or not, is good in itself and cannot be in vain. If it is imitated widely, the way will be open in due time to a true Christian civilization, a true Christian art. If it is not, it would seem that the world must disintegrate yet further before Christendom returns. But that is not ours to judge.

The Phoenix builds the Phoenix' nest;
Love's architecture is his own.

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DEATH

*Where are the merchants and the money-lenders
Whose love sang in the wires between the seaports and the inland granaries?*

*Is the old trader any safer than the sailor sent to drown
Crossing the world's end in a wooden schooner?*

*Where are the generals who sacked the sunny cities
And burned the cattle and the grain?
Or is the politician any safer in his offices
Than a soldier shot in the eye?*

*Take time to tremble lest you come without reflection
To feel the furious mercies of my friendship,
(Says death) because I come as quick as intuition.*

*Cliffs of your hangovers were never half so dizzy as my infinite abyss:
Flesh cannot wrestle with the waters that are in the earth,
Nor spirit rest in icy clay!*

*More than the momentary night of faith, to the lost dead,
Shall be their never-ending midnight:*

*Yet all my power is conquered by a child's "Hail Mary"
And all my night forever lightened by one waxen candle!*

Frater M. Louis, O.C.S.O.
(Thomas Merton.)

A B C D E

L M N O

U V W X

1 2 3 4 5

GHIJK

QRSTJ

Z e p v

5 7 8 9 4 7

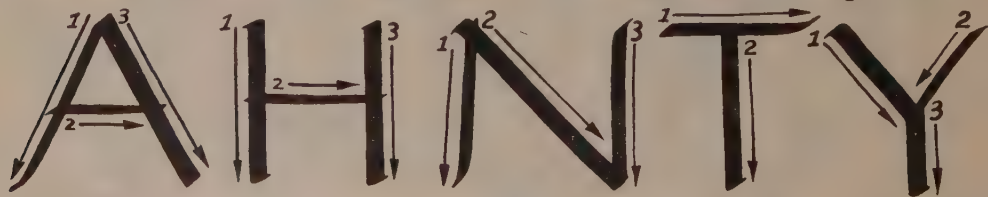
The Roman Majuscule

E. M. Catich

THE alphabet shown in the accompanying plate is a modern adaptation of that of the Roman inscriptions of the first half of the second century A. D., the period covered by the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. The original inscriptions were written with a brush on stone, whereas this rendering of the same forms is written with a bamboo reed on paper.* It is not a slavish copy, but a new expression of the same letter-ideas, freely written and reproduced without retouching. It is only slightly reduced.

We who live in the age of printing, and who therefore accept the printer's convention of the two alphabets—upper and lower case—find it hard to realize that to the Romans there was only one alphabet. No matter how little an A scratched with a stylus on a wax tablet might resemble an A cut upon a monument, both, were thought of as manifestations of the same form. It is evident the Roman people recognized only one set of forms, though the actual visible letters, affected by a variety of materials, tools, purposes and individual idiosyncracies, expressed these forms in a variety of ways. In other words, in rapid writing there is always a tendency for the writer to yield to the demands of the hand (the organ of writing) and forget those of the eye (the organ of reading.) The strict inscriptional forms become softened and blurred by cursiveness, and if the process of favoring the hand at the expense of the eye progresses, scrawling and illegibility result. But if cursive modification also is governed by rules, so that the changes in the formal letters are always much the same, the degeneration is kept under control, and scrawling and illegibility are avoided. This control is supplied by consistently making each stroke in a certain accepted direction, and in a certain sequence.

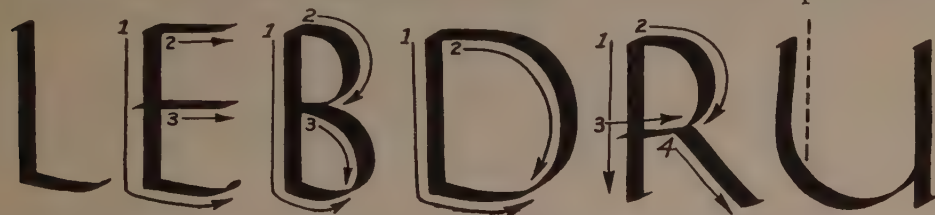
The correct classical sequence as practiced by the Roman sign-writers and inscription cutters is here indicated by the use of numbered arrows. Notice particularly the stroke sequence in the letters A, H, N, T, Y, E, B, D and R. The initial corner-turning stroke in B, D and E, is the same as that in L. Of particular interest is the third stroke in R. At one time the Greek letters PI and RHO differed only in that the loop was open in one case and joined below to the vertical stem in the other. To make certain that the loop in the RHO was closed, the writers added at its bottom a short stroke from left to right. In rapid writing this stroke grew into a



* For instructions for cutting reed pens, see Benson and Carey, *The Elements of Lettering*, p. 42 and Edward Johnston *Writing and Lettering and Illuminating* p. 55. Bamboo canes such as used by the florist for supporting flowers and plants make hard sharp reeds.

ligature, swash, or tail, and, because this still more surely distinguished the RHO from the PI, it was kept as the characteristic stroke of the former letter. Thus the Greek RHO became the Roman R. It would not have done so if the strict stroke direction and sequence had not been maintained.

As shown in fig. 2, the vertical stem is a stroke of almost maximum width. The weight of letters is expressed as a ratio between this stem thickness and the total height of the letter. The finer inscriptions of the



second century were from nine to eleven stem-widths high, the letters on the base of the Trajan column averaging nine and a half stem-widths. But we must remember that these were large letters, and brush-written. Reed-written letters, if not much less than one nor much more than two inches in height, are usually of from seven to nine stem-widths high. The alphabet in the plate is nine stem-widths high. The ratio between the stem-width and the thinner horizontal strokes is determined by the angle between the thin edge of the reed; and therefore the thin stroke it makes and the writing line. With majuscules this is usually about 30° , though in writing minuscules it may be increased to 35° , or even more. A quick way of checking the proper writing-angle of the reed is to make the letter F. When the reed is held at the proper angle, the horizontal arms of the F should be about half the width of the stem.

The stem of D and the left stems of N and U incline slightly from the vertical. Notice the very slight curve in the thick oblique stroke of M and N. The middle bar of F is lower than the corresponding stroke in E. In B, D, E and L the lower arm is not quite perpendicular to the stem. C, G and S have flattened arms. In the letter G observe the sharp internal angle where the curved stroke meets the stem. In K the junction between the arms and the stem is kept very delicate.

K, Y and Z were rarely used in the second century, being found chiefly in words and names borrowed from the Greek, as KAL., KAR., DIONYSI, ZEUS, ZEPHYRUS, ZMYRNA, etc. J, U and W are more modern additions to the alphabet. W appears in German and English writing centers in the eleventh, and J and the round U in the fifteenth century. In the plate these six letters have been added to those derived from the classical inscriptions, being written, as far as possible on the same principles and in the same spirit.



Sacred Art in Canada

M. A. Couturier O. P.

IF ever there were a Catholic country, and one in which the Church exercises her full authority, it is the Province of Quebec. What is the condition of Christian art in Canada, and particularly in Quebec? Christian art is entirely in the hands of the clergy, and through the clergy in those of the men of business. The few artists who live there have practically no hand in supplying the needs of the Church. The clergymen decide what is wanted, and the business men supply it. Roughly speaking, that is the situation.

It would be impertinent for me, a stranger, or at best a distant relative, to answer these questions, and I would prefer the reader to form his own judgment. Indeed, it is really only necessary to ask these questions clearly, for to anyone who has had training in artistic matters the answers are obvious. But in leaving judgment to the reader I should like to point out that the existing situation, deplorable as it may be from an aesthetic point of view, may well have redeeming features. For Catholic life and religion have other requirements than aesthetic ones. Indeed, the primary requirements of the Church are not aesthetic at all, and her essential needs may very well be satisfied where aesthetic needs are not.

So before speaking of Christian art as art—which is the subject I have been asked to discuss—I feel bound to say that while contemporary religious architecture, painting and sculpture in this country may continue to fulfill passably well the primary needs of religion, that they have ceased almost entirely to have any artistic quality. The best works derived from an archeological study of the past, the worst from plain commercialism.

But almost everyone would agree that beauty and goodness should go hand in hand. The good taste, the distinction and the charm of the old Canadian churches were a notable part of the dignity of worship, and of the delicacy and nobility also perhaps of Christian souls. There would be a definite gain, therefore, if art and beauty could today regain their former position in the churches.

Can this be done? I believe that, although difficult, it is not impossible. The chief difficulties are these. In the first place the clergy are not trained to make sound artistic judgments under modern conditions, and with very few exceptions, cannot be expected to have such training. We cannot count on them to take any positive stand. In the second place, the men of business are in complete control of the productive situation. They are strongly organized, well equipped, and willing to supply a public's bad taste. It is no exaggeration to say that it is as impossible to count on the businessman for the revival of Christian art, as on the clergyman. It is only too clear that his interests lie in an altogether different direction.

Our attempt must be made, therefore, in the face of the gravest difficulties. Our chances of success are small indeed; but they are not non-existent. In what do these chances consist?



We have the good will of certain priests, and of a few men of business, and this is precious, but it is not there that our hope lies. Our hope is in the inborn and inerradicable artistic abilities of the French-Canadian people. We seldom see evidences of these gifts today. They are beginning to be buried, but they are still close to the surface, and for another generation or two may be expected to remain so. These gifts were obvious to all in the time of our grandfathers and grandmothers, who built and carved the old churches so charmingly, and who gave us the wonderful country bed-spreads, the hooked rugs, and the "catalogues." If their grandchildren were to open their eyes and their hearts, they could still see, in spite of all the wastage, the remains of these treasures. If they were perhaps more humble, or had been educated and instructed with less folly, they might again feel within themselves the deep stirring of these unpretentious artistic powers.

For these are still alive within them. The drawings and paintings of children in this country are remarkable. Among the younger students of Borduas in Montreal and of Lemieux in Quebec, there are some whose work shows a strength, an audacity and a sureness of taste which put us all to shame, teachers and professional artists alike. The essential abilities are still alive, and in sufficient force to provide the province of Quebec with a normal artistic output. How can we best use it?

The first thing to be done is to save the gifts that we have. Some children of ten to fifteen years old have a spontaneous instinct for beauty, and an assurance and natural freedom of taste which fade and are lost as they get older. These native gifts are entrusted, in the schools and colleges, to art teachers, and the truth obliges me to say that these teachers, nine times out of ten, warped as they are by their environment or by the academic education they have received, are unable to recognize or respect the living abilities they are supposed to develop. If we are seriously interested in the future of Canadian art, we must begin with a drastic reformation of the methods by which art teachers, both lay and religious, are educated.

Secondly, we must realize clearly the exact limits of what is possible. Even with the gifts of which we have spoken, it would be unreasonable to expect masterpieces at once. Masterpieces come from masters, and in spite of all our plans and hopes, great artists have a way of being born anywhere, and usually where they are least expected. There is nothing to be done about that. On the other hand, there is a certain common artistic level which it is possible to reach, and which it is a duty to reach. Until recently that standard was the normal one in all the old countries, whether civilized or "savage."

To reach this common standard the artist should not set himself to achieve ambitious and showy results, but he must try to solve very simple problems perfectly. The beautiful things that the grandfathers and grandmothers produced were the results of just this approach—the perfect solutions of very humble problems. The modest furniture, rugs and bedspreads that delight us with their charm, the elementary harmonies of but two or three colors, the uncomplicated geometric compositions and simple floral patterns, these are all in a very pure tradition of perfection and humility, a tradition which it must be our concern to bring back to life.

But at present this is not understood. Instead “rural crafts” are fostered for the benefit of the tourist trade, and the people of the countryside are encouraged to produce wood carvings and hooked rugs representing rustic scenes and country types, or pretentious sunsets designed by art teachers and “artists”. This sort of thing ends in the spoiling of what remains of natural good taste in the farm houses and among the simple people.

If this spirit of simplicity and perfection, still so close to us, were to flourish again in the province of Quebec, we might once again have a Christian art in this Christian land. It would be an art without vulgarity and pretentiousness, and it would be alive. This has always come about when art was kept a part of the life of the people and it could come about here. When the country people themselves make those things that they understand and are able to make for their own church, the future of Christian art in this country will be assured. Altars might perfectly well be made by village carpenters and blacksmiths, and some of the old-fashioned bedspreads would make beautiful and worthy hangings for them. And the people would love the more a church which was thus the more their own church. All Christian art would gain a soundness and flavor. Such works of art might well be crude, but they would certainly be cleaner and more honest and respectable than the plaster or gilded tin gimcracks for which the pastor pays such a price in Montreal or Quebec, wares which by their pretentious fake-sumptuousness flatter widespread but ignoble popular instincts, and are but a poor manifestation indeed of the virtues of humility and poverty of spirit so essential to Christianity.

With respect and care for natural artistic gifts still living; with a love of things simple, things perfectly achieved because simple to make; with a return to healthy traditions of craftsmanship, a restoration of Christian art in Canada would be possible. This beautiful country is still young, and what remains of old skills of all kinds, and of native good taste, is more than sufficient to give back to the churches the freshness, charm and dignity of former days.

Many will hold that in times like these such values are unimportant, but very small things often manifest qualities of mind and heart without which Christian civilization in a people does not bear its full fruit.



Translated freely by Ade de Bittance and Graham Carey from *Reconvergements d'Art Sacré in Canada* an essay published in *Art et Catholicism* by Rev. M. A. Conturia O. P. Editors de L'Aubae Montreal.

Midges

Monsignor Hauber

ON a summer evening our attention is often drawn to clouds of dancing insects that seem to hang in the air. Where do they come from and what are they for? We call them gnats. Science says that they neither eat nor drink and that their airy existence is short, a few days at most. But for the moment they seem to enjoy their place in the sun.

However, in preparation as it were, for these few fleeting moments of play and joy, they had actually spent a whole year in the dark depths of a river or lake or under the stale slime of a stagnant pool, searching for food and fighting for life. In this aquatic stage they were worm-like creatures, blood-red, squirming, busy devouring minute plant life, slowly growing in size, eluding their enemies. Conditions down there are such that scientists wonder how they obtain enough oxygen to breathe. Their enemies are numerous; fish eat them, parasites pursue them. A gnat family is very large—thousands of individuals emerge from one batch of eggs—but at the end of a year the average number that survives is exactly two—about one one hundredth of one per cent.

When the year of darkness down in the depths comes to an end the lucky survivor is full grown, a half inch long; it seems to be weary of its work-a-day routine and it yearns for a place in the sun. A week of fasting and resting does the trick. At the beginning of the week it was a clumsy, legless, reptilian thing; at the end of the week the transformation is a miracle. It is now a fairy thing with transparent wings, long feathery antennae, enormous compound eyes, six slender legs, all wrapped in a sheath of colorless celophane. The dainty package rises to the surface, splits open, and out pops a glorified creature, the adult gnat, all in a matter of seconds. Its feeding habits are now replaced by a social instinct which draws large numbers of them together in swarms for mating purposes, the females lay their eggs on some convenient body of water, and the year's cycle starts all over.

What are they here for? The gnat, of course, does not know, it merely lives its life; that is, it lives if it is lucky. The majority die without ever seeing the sun; and in that death lies the secret of their place in the divine scheme of things. Down there in the water they are food for fish. Investigation has demonstrated that they supply almost half of the food eaten by our common fresh water fishes. Now, in God's plan for men, fish loom large; they are an important part of man's food supply, they furnish a means of healthful recreation to many of us. If we reflect, therefore, that gnats and their kin make it possible for fish to populate the world's waters, we will understand that without them our world would not be what it is.

Most gnats are harmless, we do not mind them, and we may be glad to know that they serve a purpose. But we despise their biting relatives,

the mosquitoes. Yet, these too, undoubtedly, have a legitimate place in God's world, and before we proceed ruthlessly to exterminate them with our modern DDT bombs, it might be well to find out what that place is.

At any rate, tiny insect creatures like the gnats made it possible for the apostles to be fishermen in the Sea of Galilee, and for Christians in the catacombs to adopt the fish as the symbol of Christ. In God's world there is no isolation policy, nothing exists for itself alone; the whole is a mighty woven fabric in which each unit is a knot, a link, an essential element in the general scheme of things.

This arrangement in the subhuman order is duplicated in human society; it is symbolic of the communion of saints in the supernatural order. Man, of course, can cooperate consciously and freely with the Divine Will, whereas the gnat does his bit blindly and by compulsion; but the really essential difference is that the spirit of man is made to the image and likeness of the Great Spirit, so that the life of a man is not a transient phenomenon. When a man gives up his life, as does the gnat, in the furtherance of the divine plan, he loses that part of his being which is comparable to the gnat, namely, his physical body. He does not lose his human life, rather he finds it in the eternal contemplation of God and his works. This is so because man is more than a creature of God, he is God's friend.



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: "Could you suggest a simple bibliography for lettering and anatomy?"

ANSWER: "For lettering and writing I suggest:
Writing and Lettering and Illuminating by Edward Johnston,
The Elements of Lettering by J. H. Benson and A. G. Carey,
Lettering by Graily Hewitt,
Manuscript and Inscription Letters, by Edward Johnston and Eric Gill, a portfolio of 16 plates with notes.
For Anatomy:

Anatomical Diagrams for the Use of Art Students by James Dunlop
Anatomy for Art Students by Arthur Thomson
Duval's Artistic Anatomy by A. Melville Paterson
Plastisch-Anatomischer Hand Atlas by Fritz Schider
Atlas and Textbook of Human Anatomy by Sobotta McMurrich. (This is a medical anatomy, but volume I, dealing with bones, ligaments, joints, and muscles is admirably suited for artistic anatomy.)

QUESTION: "Can you tell me what attitude we, as Catholics, ought to take towards "Modern Art?" I refer particularly to the extremists—painters like Picasso and Mondrian, sculptors like Brancusi and Epstein, and to the architects, writers and musicians who seem to follow similar principles, or freedom from principles, in their special arts."

ANSWER: Even if anyone were found competent to answer this question with full justice to the different artists named, it would be difficult to compress what should be said into a short answer. This, however, may be affirmed with some confidence. The modern extremists are in rather a violent reaction against certain secular artistic ideas of the 19th century. Among these ideas are the following: That sculptures and paintings should have instructive or at least narrative purposes; that the appearances of physical objects should be reproduced as faithfully as possible; that materials and techniques are of little real importance. They also had quite insufficient ideas about the healthy functioning of the free imagination. All Victorian artists were not equally dominated by these ideas, but they certainly strongly colored the artistic scene.

The men of the "modern" movement discovered the falsehood of these convictions, and took up a position as far from the mean of goodness, truth and beauty as that to which they reacted. They saw that, like a Bokhara rug, a painting may be beautiful and yet tell us no story, and may be beautiful and yet resemble no other thing in appearance. They learned that materials and techniques are not entirely passive, but have rights of their own that

must be respected under threat of ugliness. And they learned that the success of a work of art is due to a large extent to the degree which the imagination (in which the image to be imposed is developed and seen) functions without the cramping effects of introspection.

It is characteristic of the untrained to see what is good and to be blind to what is bad in the familiar and accepted, and to see the bad and not the good in the unfamiliar. This is the essence of parochialism. In this case it is as hard for the conservatives who are still living mentally in the Victorian Age to see the merits of the "moderns", as it is for the latter to see and appreciate what is good in the work of the eighties and nineties. But for those who understand the Doctrine of the Mean, and are familiar with the emotional and intellectual pendulum-swinging which it explains, can evaluate roughly the arts of the 19th and 20th centuries with its aid. Those who know how to use the Doctrine of Four Causes can see how the Victorians stressed the importance of Final Causes as they understood them, and undervalued Formal Causes. And they can see how the "moderns", disgusted with the "anecdotal" and "imitative" errors of their forbearers, have forgotten the importance of Final Causes, but have a sounder appreciation of the importance of the Formal.

As students of Catholic philosophy we should be able to see the good in both periods, see and deplore the bad in both, and as artists try in our own work to achieve the good and avoid the bad.

QUESTION: "What objection, if any, is there to finger painting?"

ANSWER: All materials and all techniques are good in themselves, and finger painting is no exception. But a valid technique is not necessarily used for a valid purpose. The end does not justify the means, but neither does the means justify the end. All work should, if possible, be performed with joy, but the joy is not the reason for performing the work. The good of someone beside the artist must be the end, or the joy will be a hollow one.

This is Catholic doctrine, but there are many who do not accept it. Many believe that the pleasure of the moment justifies any action which is not obviously and directly harmful to self and to others. Those who have brought finger painting into the schools are for the most part of this belief. The technique is associated therefore with an expressionism and an hedonism which introduces children too soon to the abnormalities of the adult world of art.

Where the emphasis is on the technique, rather than on the end for which the technique is the means, we may be sure that we are in the presence of a perversion of values. This is usually the case with finger painting. The technique and the pleasure of its exercise, are deemed their own end. Restraint and discipline are at a minimum, and the young student is encouraged to a disregard of the final causes.

On the other hand, in certain abnormal conditions, finger painting may have a corrective-therapeutic purpose which is quite valid. In the case of

children who are frightened, tense, and unable to allow the common imagination to function freely, there are techniques, among them finger painting, which are useful in encouraging the timid little patient, and in loosening up the taut and strained muscles and nervous system. Normal children, however, should not need such special treatment, but rather require those technical mental disciplines upon which all valid art is founded.

QUESTION: "Do you think artists use color for the sake of its symbolism? Is it not rather that color is the music of light? It would be very difficult to interest young people in the correct use of color by means of symbolism, whereas it is not only easy, but a joy, to lead them to the creation of designs by an approach through the terms of music."

ANSWER: This is several questions in one. The best works of art usually serve men on several levels at once. Color, skillfully handled is enjoyable emotionally and may also be intellectually meaningful. Colored artifacts may give joy both to the outer eye and to the intelligence. But for the appeal to the emotions a skill and sensitivity are necessary which are not necessary in symbolism. I take it that "the correct use of color" refers to this production of visual harmonies. If I am right, this skill has nothing to do with symbolism as such. The palette of the maker of symbols is childishly simple. Red is anything that can be called by that name, anything between orange and violet in the spectrum, anything not so neutralized as to be brown or too high or low in value. Our Lady's cloak is blue, because the sky is blue, but her cloak may be any blue that can be recognized. The vestments of the Pentecostal season are green, because that expresses growth, but it may be any of the myriad greens worn by the myriads of growing plants. A harmonious use of colors gratifies the eye; symbolic use of color instructs the intelligence by supplying it with a concept for which the color stands. Both sense and intelligence should if possible be served, but intelligence is the nobler faculty. I think it is obvious that most "artists" are more interested in emotional than in intellectual results.

There are without doubt analogies between the patterning of sounds which we call music, and the patterning of light, but it may be dangerous to pursue these analogies far without understanding the differences imposed on the two kinds of arrangement by the two kinds of material arranged. For example, in the case of color, there seem to be no strict convention of scale, whereas the emotional effect of music depends completely on the understanding of the particular mode or scale used. There are many ways of amplifying the simple harmonic scale so as to make it musically serviceable, but we cannot understand musical patterns unless we understand the particular scale upon which they are based. And so we get the paradoxical situation where a sensitive occidental revels in the harmonies of Chinese painting which he can appreciate, while he shudders at the harmonies of Chinese music, which are to him nothing but a horrible noise.

This is a single instance of the basic differences between music and painting which make analogies between them somewhat treacherous. This is obviously too large a subject to be dealt with more fully in this column.

WHO'S WHO AND WHAT

IN the Easter issue we introduced Walter Shewring to our readers by reprinting his excellent and definitive article on Eric Gill. In this issue we have, in "Art in Christian Philosophy", an article which Mr. Shewring has written especially for the *Quarterly*. We offer it as one of the soundest and most comprehensive essays yet to appear on this much discussed subject.

The President of the C.A.A. moves forward from theory to practice. In the Christmas issue, Father Catich gave us his arguments favoring printscript. In this issue, with "The Roman Majuscule", our readers have an opportunity to become acquainted with the technique of printscript writing. Father Catich has again been generous in supplying the cuts which accompany the article, together with the several cuts which appear throughout this issue. The favorable comments we have received serve to deepen our gratitude.

The essay "Recommencements d'Art Sacred au Canada", an essay published in "Art et Catholicisme", Editions de L'Aubre,

Montreal, is by M-A Couturier, O.P., and has been translated freely by two members of the C.A.A. Since it is a short excerpt from the book, "Art et Catholicisme", we have been permitted to offer it to our readers. Father Couturier headed the Art Department of Notre Dame of Maryland for several years during his stay in the United States and has only recently returned to Paris. An artist and critic of note, he offers much constructive criticism which can be taken in good part by Catholics south of the Canadian border.

We wish to thank Monsignor Hauber of St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Ia., for his thoughtful end of summer piece Midge. We also have another poem taken from New Directions publication, "Thirty Poems," the work of Thomas Merton.

The new department, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, makes its first appearance in this issue and should prove provocative enough to replace its predecessor, the D.A. Contributions are welcomed by Father Catich who has volunteered to handle the department.



C. A. A. NEWS

The following reports cover recent summer school activities:

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM AT THE ST. LUKE WORKSHOP

We had two classes in the St. Luke workshop at St. Ambrose college under the direction of Father Catich. One class in writing and lettering and the other in figure-drawing and anatomy. After one week we were familiar enough with letter-making to arrange write, and decorate simple texts. For our daily homework we were required to write a letter to family or friends in our new "hand-writing." At first it seemed impossible to do, especially since we had to learn to 'write' without the use of any kind of guide-lines, but in an unbelievably short time it became apparent that that was the only right way to 'write'. Ever since each of us in the writing class has discarded, forever, our former cursive spencerian writing.

However useful the writing and lettering was the work we had in anatomy and figure-construction supplied a much needed gap in our artistic knowledge. We all feel much more confident in anatomy and in drawing figures. We studied the skeleton thoroughly and learned to draw from memory not only the proportions of the body but the larger muscles masses of the body in their various actions. Each of us did a large, flat painting of a saint of our own choosing, and at least one medallion in stained-glass, while four or five of the more advanced did larger figure windows. Needless to say, we all learned much in choosing glass, cutting, firing in the kiln, assembling and cementing glass.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM AT THE NOTRE DAME WORKSHOP

When His Excellency, the Most Reverend Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, stated in the *Catholic Art Quarterly* of Easter, 1945 (p. 8), "God must be in our work, in our business, in every phase of our daily life. We must become the sort of people fit to share the life of God," he sounded the keynote of a matter of such vital im-

portance that we recognized in it a duty to be carried out.

The organization of our summer school program has proven fruitful to the Sisters who attended the art classes at the workshop of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. For this reason we hope it might be helpful to other teachers engaged in such work.

Sister M. Noreen, S.S.N.D., Head of the Art Department presented a *Survey of Contemporary Art* embracing the period from Impressionism to that of Surrealism. The aim underlying this choice was to inculcate the idea that when they were studying modern art the students were studying the results of living creative art. It was to awaken men to a realization of potentialities of greatness in the period in which they live so they might be "fit to share the life of God." The correlation of art with philosophy was considered in the study of *The Philosophy of Beauty*, a course given by Sister M. Virginia, S.S.N.D., of the Philosophy department of the College. Miss Paula Eicke, a ceramic instructor at the college and a graduate of Lindenhaus School, Rotenburg, Germany, taught the course in *General Design* which included ceramics, linoleum cuts and other practical problems. Sister M. Dorothea, S.S.N.D., introduced a course in *Calligraphy*. The results of the work of the last two courses were exhibited during the last week and may be used for future exhibitions of the *Catholic Art Association*.

The presentation of a series of discussions on the *Philosophy of Art* conducted by the Reverend John Keating, C.S.P., of the Catholic University of America, was an especially enjoyable feature of the summer school session. In the four periods assigned, the following topics were discussed: The Place of Art in the Field of Philosophy; the Scholastic Doctrine of the Four Causes; the Aesthetic Experience of the artist; Art and Morality. These discussions attended mostly by art students but also by a number of other members of the faculty and student body of the summer school were an integrating force in establishing the Thomistic relationship between art and philosophy. Father Keating's very clear presentation summed up

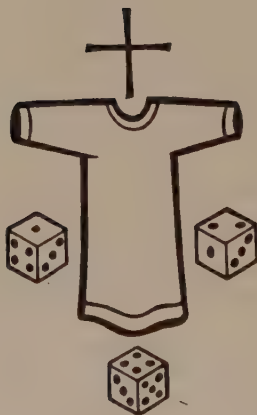
for us the role of the artist and the art-lover: the former submissive to the object which he has for his use and the latter, submissive to the thing made.

To develop a true appreciation of art and to become an instrument in the making of things according to right reason because of the God-like gift given rational creatures has been our aim this summer. We have tried to make our students realize that "art is the right conception of things to be made," (St. T. 1-11, q. 57, art. 4) and to place man and his work in their correct perspective. As Eric Gill never tired repeating: "The artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist."

As there has been little or no response to the suggestion that the C.A.A. bring out a series of Christmas cards, we offer an alternative. The St. Leo Shop, R.F.D., No. 4, Upton, Massachusettes, is putting out a

series of twenty assorted Christmas cards and envelopes for one dollar. This set has been designed by the staff artists of the *Catholic Worker*, Father Capich, Ade Bethune, Mary K. Finegan, Dorothy Gauchat, Carl and Mary Paulson. All these artists, incidentally, are members of the C.A.A. The response to this offer will aid us in gauging the response that might be had next year to a more inclusive C.A.A. set.

Lack of response, indeed, seems to be a besetting evil. This may have been due to the unsettled and hurried conditions which the war years imposed upon us. We hope that the end of war will change this condition. Artist members are urged to put their talents to work and send in samples and prices to the editor. A jury will be chosen to select the cards to be included in a C.A.A. Christmas set from the sample entries. May 1, 1946 will be the deadline.



This *Catholic Art Association* is NOT just another
art association

It is THE art association for *Catholics*

Because it is based on Catholic ideology and enunciates art principles which
are consistent with Catholic thought;

Because it upholds high standards of art and supports these standards with
strong reasons;

Because it assists Catholic artists to harmonize their profession with their
Faith by contacts with other Catholic artists; and

Because it brings to light the efforts being made toward the true revival of
Catholic art in this country.

The Catholic Art Association holds national conventions at regular intervals. Between these intervals the several regions, according to their needs, arrange special meetings, exhibitions and demonstrations. Professional and educational interests are furthered by the activities of the Professional and Educational committees through their distinct exhibit and conference programs. Wherever possible, especially during the summer months, co-operative activities on art projects are sponsored by the Advisory Board. Such activities in Catholic environments offer opportunities for self-advancement through the stimulation of Catholic thought.

The C.A.A. maintains a small but choice art library for the use of its members. Several types of traveling exhibits are available. The library is philosophical in content while the exhibits aim to exemplify that philosophy in practice.

The *Catholic Art Quarterly*, published with ecclesiastical approval, is the organ of the Association. It is a magazine which has been proving itself of technical, critical, and instructive value to an ever increasing number of readers here and abroad. Contributors to the *Quarterly* are nationally known authorities in their various fields. Although the editorial policy makes no pretense toward news gathering, the consistent reading of the publication develops a well-rounded knowledge of current catholic art thought and achievement throughout the country. A *Quarterly* subscription is included with each type of membership.

